Links between regional and competition policy

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OBJECTIVE: the Commission communication deals with regional policy and competition policy and seeks to reinforce their concentration and mutual consistency in the context of Agenda 2000.
SUBSTANCE: taking into account the various stages which must still be completed and the various parties involved, all the conditions are in place, from the Commission's point of view, for consistency to be achieved from 2000 between the two different types of regional area, namely the areas where national regional aids are authorised (Article 92(3) of the Treaty) and the areas where these aids are not authorised. In adopting this communication the Commission wishes to encourage the Member States to do the same, both individually and collectively within the relevant Council bodies. Therefore: - the Commission will propose to the Council that in the future Structural Fund regulations the regions lagging behind in their development should be designated by strictly applying the ceiling of 75% of per capita GDP so that these regions are the same as those qualifying for exemption under Article 92(3)(a) and thus to avoid consequent inconsistencies between the Objective 2 list and the designations under Article 92(3)(c); - in the light of the guidelines on regional state-aid schemes, the Commission calls on the Member States to notify it under Article 92(3) of all the regions treated as Objective 1 regions or qualifying for a separate regime of their own; - in the context of the future Structural Fund regulations the Commission will not accept a region as eligible under the new Objective 2 unless the Member State concerned undertakes to include it in the list of assisted regions notified to it under Article 92(3)(c). In duly justified cases the Commission could include other regions in the new Objective 2 as exceptions; - the Commission stresses that the guidelines on regional aid schemes identify eligibility under the Structural Funds as a major selection criteria; - it provides that the two designation exercises will start and end in time to guarantee that decisions can be taken in time for both designation lists to come into effect on 1 January 2000; - lastly it notes that the ceiling for coverage of total Community population in the regions of the Union (EU 15) selected under Article 92(3)(a) and 92(3)(c) is to be 42.7% in the period 2000-06.